

PRESS RELEASE

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**U.S. ATTORNEYS ANNOUNCE JOINT EFFORT
WITH LOCAL AND STATE LAW ENFORCEMENT AGENCIES
TO PUT THE BRAKES ON METH**

DUBUQUE, IA – Iowa meth makers who plan to travel to get their pseudoephedrine got a warning today from law enforcement officials in three states: going to another state to obtain the methamphetamine ingredient could land violators in federal prison.

The warning was issued during a Dubuque news conference hosted by Northern District of Iowa United States Attorney Charles W. Larson, Sr. and comes in light of Iowa's May 2005 law tightening the control of the main ingredient used to make meth – pseudoephedrine.

U.S. Attorney Larson was joined by Western District of Wisconsin U.S. Attorney Stephen Sinnott; Grant County Sheriff Keith Govier; Assistant U.S. Attorney in Charge of the Rockford, Illinois office John McKenzie; Iowa Division of Narcotics Enforcement Director Ken Carter; Dubuque County (Iowa) Attorney Fred McCaw; Dubuque County Sheriff Ken Runde, Dubuque Police Chief Kim Wadding; Jo Daviess County, Illinois State's Attorney Terry M. Kurt; and Jo Daviess County Sheriff Steve Allendorf.

“Iowa now has one of the strongest pseudoephedrine laws in the nation,” said U.S. Attorney Larson. “However, we cannot afford to let our guard down. We came together today to send a strong warning to manufacturers who think they can cross our borders to buy precursors in neighboring states. We all will aggressively enforce and prosecute those involved in the manufacture of meth.”

Sinnott, U.S. Attorney in the Western District of Wisconsin, agreed with his colleague, stating; “Wisconsin's law which went into effect on October 1 is similar to Iowa's law. We are already seeing fewer labs. Unfortunately, the problem is still there due to the incredible addictiveness of this drug. We cannot afford to be complacent and will continue to aggressively prosecute these cases.”

Assistant U.S. Attorney in Charge of the Rockford, Illinois, office John McKenzie agreed, “In Illinois, we are looking forward to a tougher state law taking effect in January. We are committed to working with our law enforcement partners in Iowa, Wisconsin and across the Midwest to combat the illegal trafficking of pseudoephedrine and manufacturing of methamphetamine.”

Law enforcement officials at the press conference discussed their history of cooperation in prosecuting drug manufacturers and vowed to continue that cooperation at the local, state, and federal levels. “If someone thinks they can avoid Iowa’s law by going to another state to get their ingredients, they are sorely mistaken,” said Carter.

Iowa “Drug Czar” Marvin VanHafften has reported the success of Iowa's new law. According to recent figures there has been an 80% reduction in the number of meth labs since May. The dramatic decrease is higher than any other state in the nation.

According to Illinois Attorney General Madigan, Illinois legislation, known as the Methamphetamine Precursor Control Act, if signed into law, will take effect on January 15, 2006. The legislation is similar to Iowa's May 2005 law and makes pseudoephedrine a controlled substance, meaning that almost all products containing this active ingredient must be kept behind pharmacy counters. Although customers wishing to purchase such products do not need a prescription, they must display a photo ID and sign a log. Under the Illinois legislation, customers may not purchase more than 7500 milligrams of pseudoephedrine in a 30-day period.

U.S. Attorney Larson and Dubuque Sheriff Runde also made special note of drug-fighting partnerships extending beyond law enforcement agencies. Many Dubuque-area businesses have voluntarily limited the sales of legitimate items that can be used to manufacture methamphetamine. Those businesses are cooperating with law enforcement agencies and have posted signs announcing their cooperation.

Receiving recognition today for being a part of this voluntary program to help fight methamphetamine production were: Steve's Ace Hardware, Theisens, Myers-Cox Co., Target, Wal-Mart, K-Mart, Sally's Beauty Salon, Three Rivers FS, HyVee, Walgreens, Tobacco Outlet, Eichman's, J & D Mart - New Vienna, Crossroads Mobile Station - Luxemburg, Shopko, Auto Zone, Family Mart, Mid-Mart - Rickardsville, Hartigs, Family Dollar, Key West True Value, EconoFoods, Kwik Stop, Puff-N-Snuff, Crop Production, and Eagle Country Market.

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